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Courtyard to Celebrate International Education at EIU

Nov-20-2007

Eastern Illinois University is making plans to honor past, present and future international students with a courtyard that will signify the importance of globalization on the campus and throughout the world.

The International Courtyard, which will be funded through donations, is to be constructed on the east side of Blair Hall, the building that houses the International Programs offices.

"The courtyard will celebrate the thousands of international students who have enriched the lives of so many others in Charleston and the campus community," said Jill Nilsen, vice president for external relations. "It's an opportunity to celebrate our diversity. It brings recognition to our international students and reinforces the importance of the globalization of our world."

Robert Augustine, dean of EIU's Graduate School, said the project is long overdue.

"We've been doing international education here for more than 50 years, and our campus has never had any physical facility to reflect our commitment," Augustine said. "We're really excited about the opportunity to begin this long-awaited project."

The flooring of the courtyard will be a terrazzo that recreates the global map; flagpoles will allow flags from around the world will be flown; and benches will be placed around the perimeter. A pergola will stand between the sidewalk and the courtyard, recreating a similar structure that was there when Blair Hall was first built.

Officials hope the courtyard will serve as a gathering area for international forums and discussions.

"It will provide a space for students, faculty and staff to join together, learn from each other, and celebrate their similarities and their differences," Nilsen said.

The project is in the fund-raising phase. Two members of the International Alumni Advisory Board who have already pledged support -- Nicholas Obiri and Tian Li -- helped unveil the design during the international alumni reunion at EIU this fall.

For more information on the courtyard or to inquire about donating toward the project, please contact Nilsen at 217-581-5984.



Artist's rendering of the planned International Courtyard, which is to be built on the east side of Blair Hall at Eastern Illinois University.